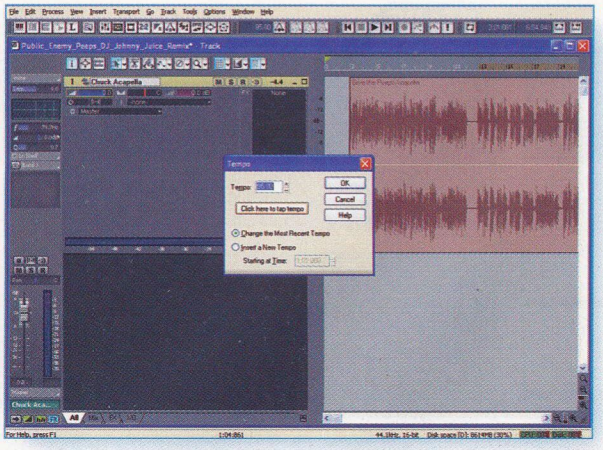
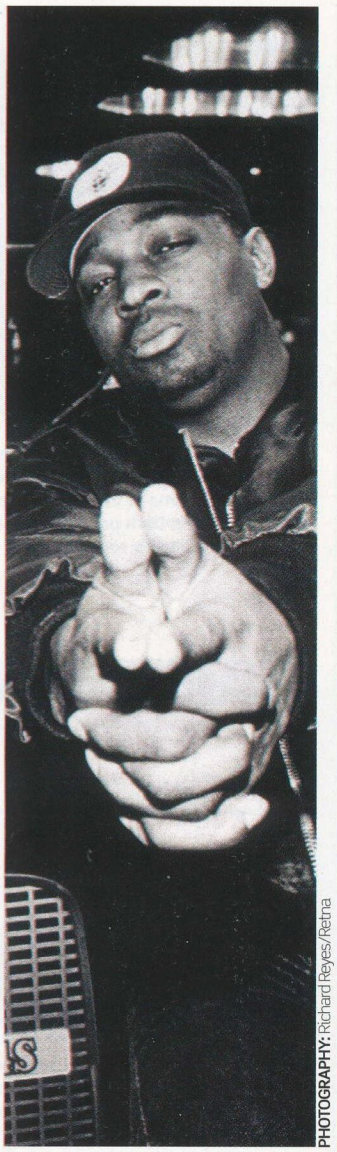
STAGE ONE Getting the drums down, with DJ Johnny Juice

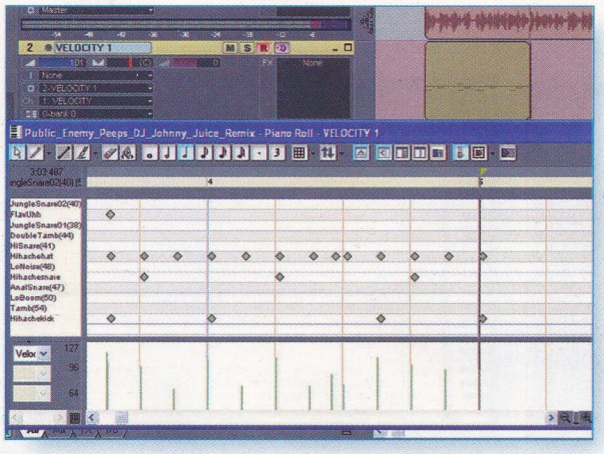


1 To get the remix started, I've opened Sonar and imported the a capella vocal track from *Gotta Give The Peeps What They Need*. I then set the tempo to 95bpm – which was actually the original setting for the track. »

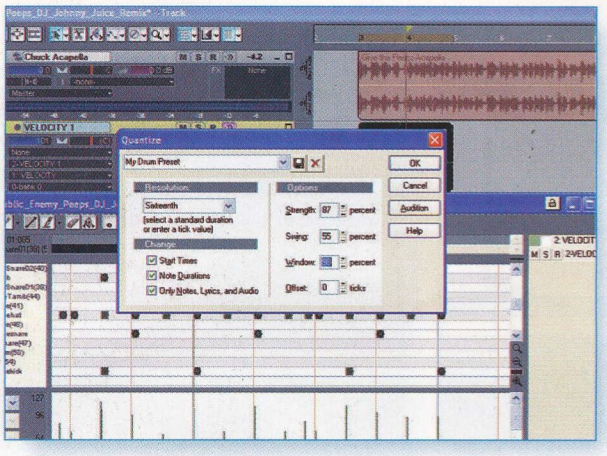
2 Next I've inserted the Velocity DXi (part of Project5) and loaded the **Jungle** soundbank. I wasn't feeling some of the stock sounds, so I've imported my own kick, snare, hi-hat and Flavor Flav vocal samples into it and saved the new bank as **Juice's Demo Bank.** »



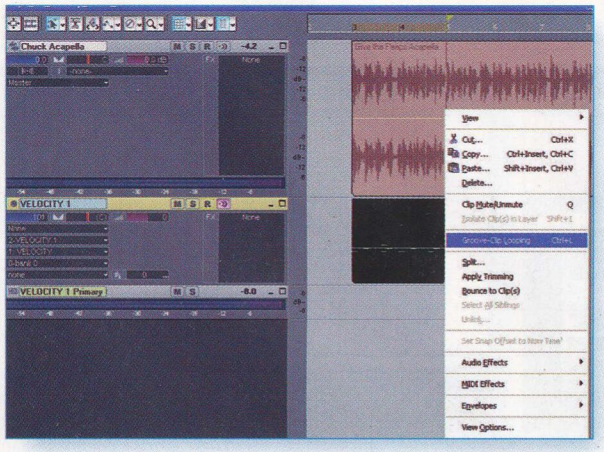
PHOTOGRAPHY: Richard Reyes/Retna



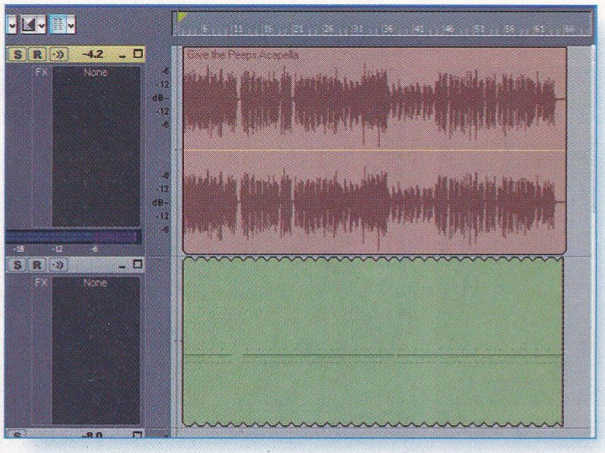
3 Here I've recorded a basic four-bar beat using these sounds. Many people over-produce the first drum track and put too much into it because they feel so inspired at this early stage. Keep this simple and move onto other tracks while the inspiration is flowing. »



4 The next thing is to quantise the drums to 16th note resolution for a mechanically tight feel. »



5 I've slip-edited the MIDI part to the end of the bar, and transformed the loop into a MIDI Groove Clip. Sonar allows you to use MIDI parts just like ACID loops. (From hereon in, all MIDI parts are slip-edited to a barline, quantised, and turned into Groove Clips.) »



6 Having done this, I've clicked and dragged to roll the pattern out until it extends towards the end of Chuck's a cappella. This gives the track a steady pulse all the way through.

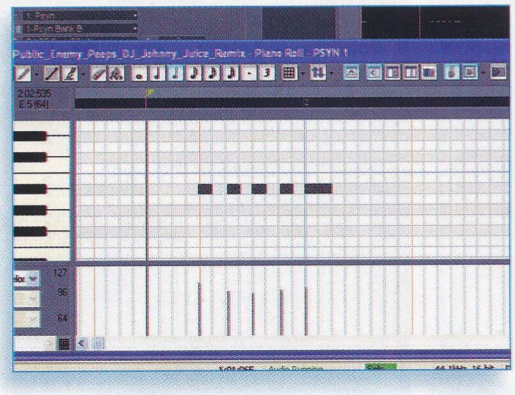
Info

DJ Johnny Juice's top five production tips

1. Be Daring. Try to think outside conventional means
2. Try to use different sounds rather than just what's currently 'en vogue'
3. Don't be afraid to make 'ugly' beats
4. Make sure that the arrangement is interesting
5. Make sure you get the absolute best vocal takes you can from your vocalist

STAGE TWO Other instrumentation

BASS



1 For the bassline, I want a tight, staccato pulse. I've used Project5's PSYN for this, because it really can give you some of the fattest, dopest sounds. I've chosen the **Bass Dark** patch from Bank B, played along to the beat with Chuck's vocals riding it, and recorded a two-bar line. »

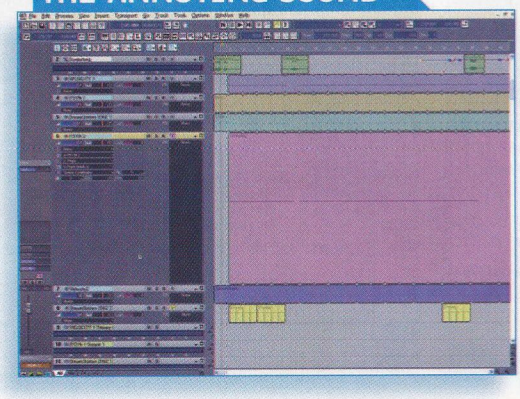
2 If you look at the part in the piano roll, you'll see I've only played a four-note rhythm on B♭ in the last beat of the bar, then landed on beat 1 of the next bar with a longer B♭ note. This rhythmic figure gives the song a steady momentum by continuously leading up into the first beat of the bar. »

STABS

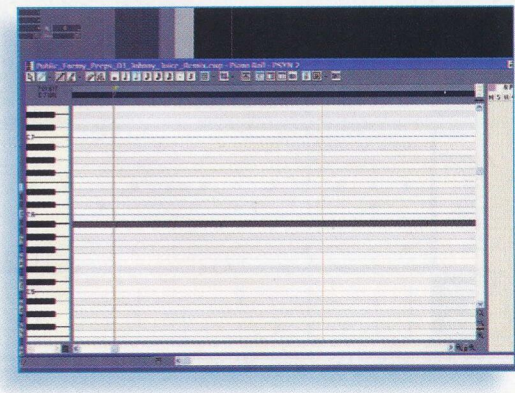
3 The bassline needs some reinforcement, so I've loaded up the Dreamstation DXi, chosen the **Organ: 02 Jazz** patch, and recorded some stabs at close to the same rhythm as the bass. »

4 The stabs were played using the E♭ minor chord (E♭ G♭ B♭). These notes add some tension because the bass is thumping on the dominant (or fifth) note of the chord (B♭). This trick gives the bassline more drive because you want to hear it resolve down to E♭. »

THE ANNOYING SOUND



5 For the first time ever in print, I'm revealing one of the secret ingredients to getting to getting that Public Enemy feel: add the 'Annoying Sound!' This is the droning sound that you hear on so many of our tracks. »

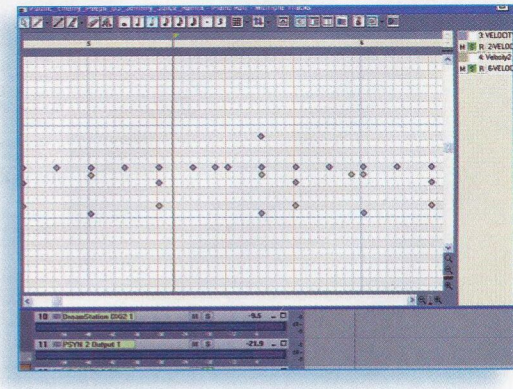


6 The key is to have two notes a semitone or two apart playing simultaneously. This 'cluster drone' adds tension and drives the beat. You'll notice in the Piano Roll that I only have one note; more on that in a second. »

MORE DRUMS

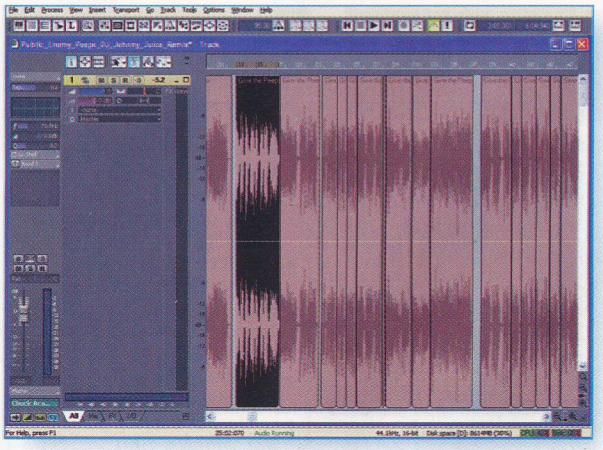
7 For this sound I've chosen PSYN. I need to be careful not to pick a sound that overshadows Chuck's voice. After finding the right patch, rather than playing two notes at the same time, as described in Step 6, I've tuned the second oscillator up two steps for the same effect. »

8 I need to add more rhythmic intensity to the drums from earlier, so I've patched in another Velocity drum machine and set it to the **Trance** patch to use its 'reverby' kick and handclap. »

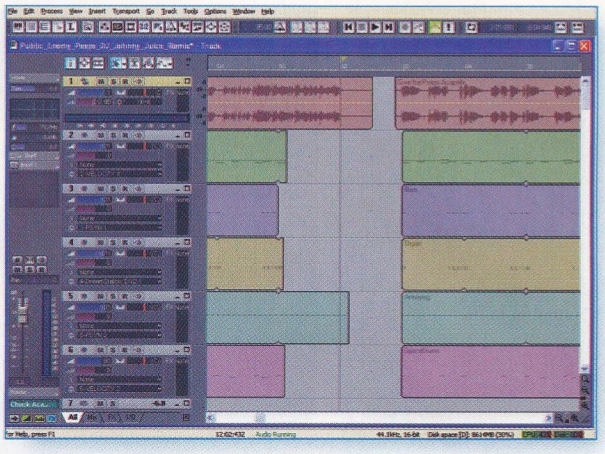


9 I've laid down another four-bar loop that interlocks with the other drum part like pieces of a puzzle. I have, however, always made the kicks hit at the same time to add more thump.

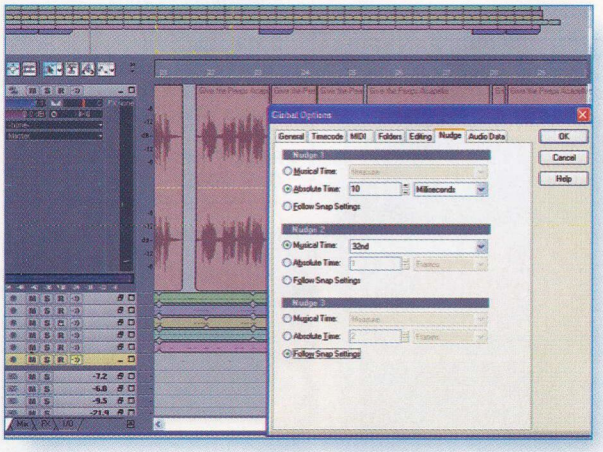
STAGE THREE The arrangement



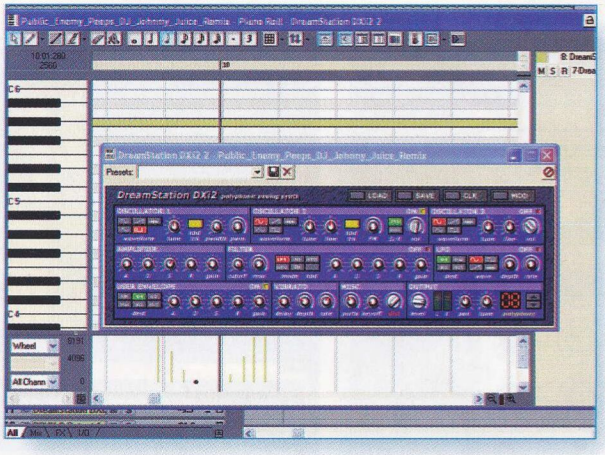
1 The original track was very driving and this remix is more downtempo, so I feel that the arrangement needs to really be able to 'breathe'. To do this, I've cut up and arranged Chuck's vocal to add some space. »



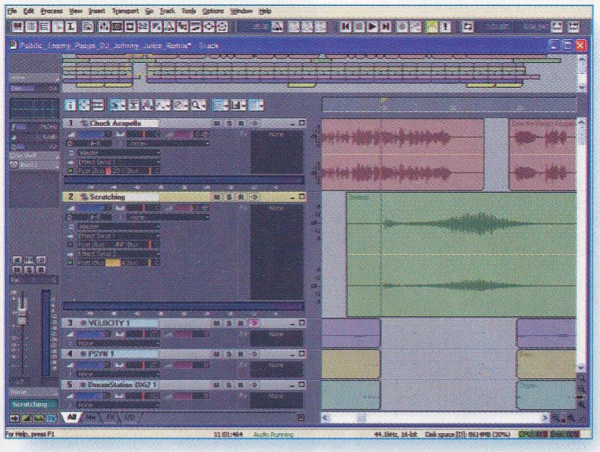
2 Before a couple of the verses I've inserted some space, dropping out all instruments and vocals, to add a long pause. Led Zeppelin called this technique the 'pregnant pause'. It adds variety and room to throw in some scratching in response to Chuck's vocal. »



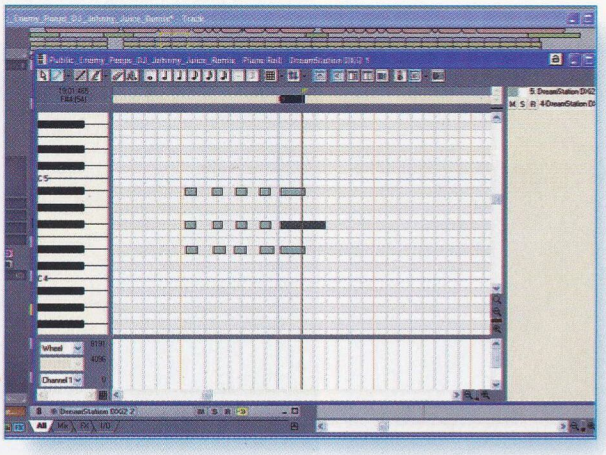
3 In a few places, the vocals don't quite lock up with the loops I've laid under them, so I've taken advantage of Sonar 4's new nudging capabilities to slide those phrases back and forth until they're in the pocket. »



4 There are still a few places in the song that need filling out, so I've inserted another Dreamstation, found a patch that's perfectly weird and sweepy sounding, and played a note with a pitchbend. I've manually placed this where needed in the arrangement. »



5 Next I've brought in some scratches to fill in the pregnant pauses, and added some samples. At this point, you would think it sounded OK, but that it isn't dynamic. The backing tracks are one continuous loop – this is the problem with a lot of music today. »



6 This next step is crucial to avoid that problem: go through and edit each track in the piano roll. I basically go by what feels right: erase some snares here, remove some kicks there, make a bass note longer, drop the groove out here and there, etc.

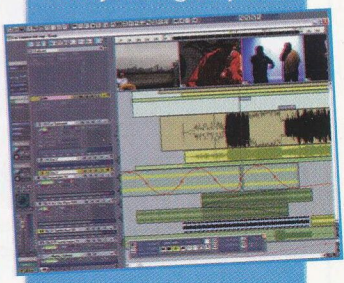
The kit

The hardware used on the original track included a Roland VS-1880, AKAI MPC-2000, Korg Triton, turntables, and various live instruments (a Gibson Les Paul, Sonor drum kit and LP Congas).

For this remix, Juice used a pair of turntables, Sonar 4 Producer Edition, and the synth and effects plug-ins found in Project5.

Sonar Producer Edition is Cakewalk's flagship DAW (we're reviewing version 4 next month) and Juice's recording software of choice. It offers arranging, editing and remixing capabilities – a software alternative to the VS-1880 hard disk recorder.

In place of the AKAI MPC-2000, Juice used the Velocity Drum Sampler from Project5. He chose Velocity for its great preset kits, sample editing and ease of use.

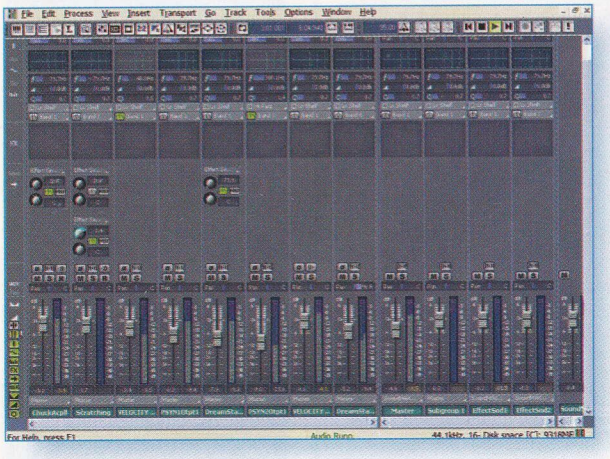


▲ Sonar 4 Production Edition is Johnny's DAW of choice

In place of the Triton, Johnny used the PSYN virtual analogue synth from Project5 and Sonar's Dreamstation DXi. PSYN models a subtractive synth with a fat analog sound, and has copious parameters and control options with which to sculpt original tones.

▲ The PSYN virtual analogue synth replaced the Korg Triton

STAGE FOUR Mixing and finishing up

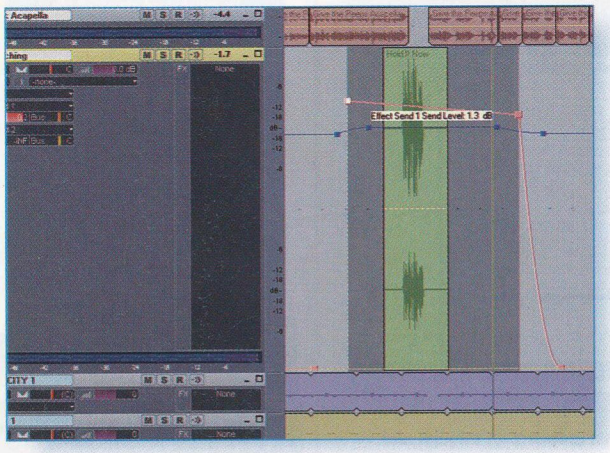


1 As I've added parts while writing the track, I've set the levels roughly where I want them. There isn't too much mixing left to do, just some slight level tweaks. What this song really needs is some sweetening with effects... »

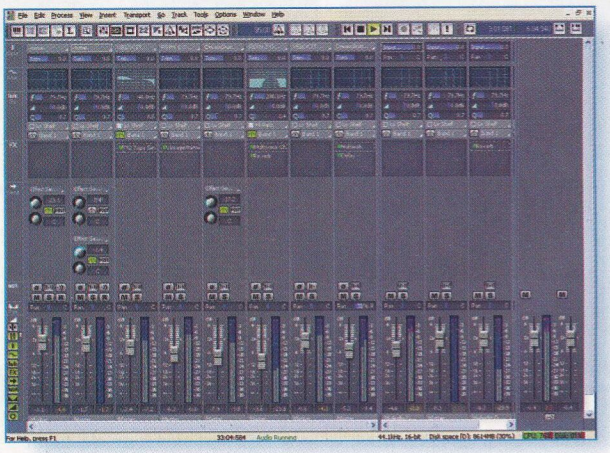
2 On the first Velocity drum track I've inserted Sonar's Tape Sim plug-in, with a 15ips tape speed, lots of **Warmth**, **Low Frequency Boost** enabled, and no **Hiss**. This effect really makes the drums warm and punchy. I've also used Sonar's Channel EQ to pump the bass and cut some highs. »

3 On the PSYN bassline, I've inserted PSP's Vintage Warmer with the **Drive**, **Low**, and **Hi** settings tweaked up a bit. This effect makes the bassline growl and adds some more harmonic overtones. »

4 For the 'Annoying Sound' I've added Project5's Chorus/Flanger and Cakewalk's Reverb. It still doesn't have that Public Enemy feel, so I've opened the Sonitus Channel EQ and selected the **Telephone** preset, making it blend in without overpowering Chuck. »



5 I want the vocals and scratches to use the same reverb, so I've patched a reverb into Effects Send 1 and sent the vocal through it. On the scratching track, I want the scratches to use a delay effect, and some to use the reverb, so I've used Send Envelopes. »

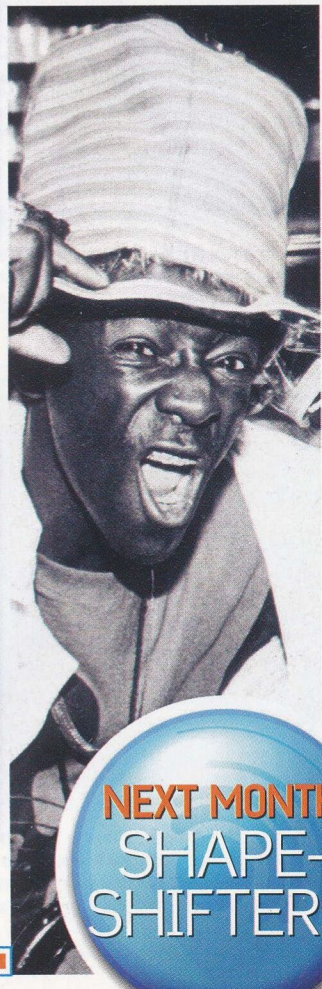


6 After some level adjustments, we're done. Some key points to bear in mind: rhythmic drive and interplay between parts is important; adding tension helps make tracks sound dope; leave space in the arrangement and add some randomness to looped parts.

Discography

DJ Johnny Juice selected discography

- Public Enemy – *Yo! Bum Rush The Show, 1987*
- Public Enemy – *It Takes A Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back, 1988*
- Slick Rick – *The Great Adventures Of Slick Rick, 1988*
- Beastie Boys – *Desperado, 1988*
- The Automator – *The Automator, 1989*
- Leaders of the New School – *Transformers, 1991*
- C&C Music Factory – *Anything Goes! 1994*
- Rob Swift – *Musica Negra Remix, 1998*
- Public Enemy – *Revolverlution, 2002*
- Kyle Jason – *The Serum, 2003*
- Public Enemy – *How Do You Sell Soul To A Soulless People Who Sold Their Soul?, 2005*
- Public Enemy – *New Whirl Odor, 2005*



NEXT MONTH SHAPE-SHIFTER